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In the Choir.

On rolled the mighty melody, as though
A multitude passed by—
A sea of sound and sweetness ; here and there
A clear young voice pealed high :

A glory crept along the vaulted roof,
And tinged the old grey stone :
The sunshine stole it from the windows where
The saints each stood alone.

Below knelt youth and beauty in their pride,
Fair as the flowers of June.—
How did that psalm of strife and agony
Chime with each young heart's tune !

And then the heavy oaken door swung back :
A woman entered in—
Wan in the face, and weary in her mien,
Her garments soiled and thin ;

And like a blot upon a robe, she stood
Amid the gorgeous fane ;
And youth and beauty drew themselves apart,
And she went out again.

Still, where the pictured Twelve Apostles stood
The light came coloured fair ;
But yet methought those men of Galilee
Had scarce been welcome there !

ISABELLA FYVIE.

The Afflictions of God.

SERMON BY THE

REV. C. J. BADLAND, M.A.

Isaiah lxiii., 9.—"In all their affliction he was afflicted."

Religious feeling often forms for itself a narrow gorge rather than a broad valley of thought, and its depth may then be most impressive. When a truth is first perceived in isolation, by prophetic insight, it often finds more simple and powerful expression than when it is brought into connection with other truths, which modify as well as complete it. That simple direct impressiveness of immediate spiritual experience is a notable characteristic of the finer parts of the Old Testament. It is exemplified in the prophetic utterance from which our text is taken, in spite of its repulsive side. We have indeed, without mitigation, the narrow national selfishness triumphing in Jehovah's vengeance on the enemies of his chosen people. The writer has no repugnance to the idea of there being hatred in God: though some Christian interpreters have felt obliged to force upon his words the impossible meaning, that the blood-stained figure was Christ, his garments reddened with his own blood shed for the deliverance of men. To the writer Jehovah is

as one who loved his friend and hated his enemy; and his vengeance, and anger and even fury, against the enemies of Israel, seemed right and natural, no blot on the divine goodness, but rather a proof of it. He had not reached the thought of God's universal love for all mankind. But all the more vividly did he realise the partial limited love which his heart's faith had grasped; God's love for his people which could not fail. He might be wrath with them for a time because of their sins, yet he loved them still as a mother loves a wayward son, pitying, forgiving, and delivering. He had abandoned them to calamities, for their robe of righteousness was defiled by sin as a polluted garment, the "filthy rags" of the much misused text from the old translation, but he loved them still. "Thou art our Father though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not." "Thou, O Jehovah, art our Father, our Redeemer is thy name from of old." Faith in the unfailing divine love had made only a narrow Niagara gorge in his thought, but it went deep down to his heart. He has many loving utterances for that love, but none perhaps more striking than that of our text: "In all their affliction he was afflicted." There are other readings and renderings. The margin of the Revised Verson gives "In all their adversities he was no adversary;" but then the next verse says that "he became their enemy, and himself fought against them," because they had rebelled and "grieved his holy spirit." Others translate "In all their affliction there was no affliction," apparently in the sense that it was but a light affliction enduring for a moment. But the familiar rendering best suits the context, "In all their affliction he was afflicted." It may seem irreverent to say that God is afflicted, that he suffers, with the suffering, but that appears to be the writer's thought. We may hesitate to accept it, but it is worth dwelling on.

When we think of God the eternal and infinite, to whom the eternal blessedness of all that will be is known as if it were already present, it seems that all temporary finite evil must be as nothing in his sight. We regard absolute perfect blessedness as a necessary part of the divine perfection. And yet, when the prophet says, "in all their affliction he was afflicted," the words find a sympathising echo in our heart. To a man who was suffering from an agonizing disease brought on by exhausing toil in a good cause, followed by ruin, disgrace, and bereavement, or alienation from all whom he loved, leaving him in pain and solitude, and shame,—to him it would hardly seem irreverent, but rather an immense consolation, and worthy of God, if he could believe that God also endured all that he endured, was afflicted in all his affliction. He would be apt to feel that if God loved him and cared for him in any real sense he must feel with him, must suffer with him.

The belief would seem as natural to such a one as it was to the prophet. It does not follow that he would be right. The most intense experiences distort as well as reveal, though profound they may be narrow. But we may at least receive a suggestion not to turn away from the thought of our text with repugnance. Rather let us see if it does not at least indicate a truth for which it is difficult to find exact expression.

The greatest practical cause of Agnosticism is the existence of evil, which causes many to feel that if there be a God he is cruel or indifferent, or so completely unknowable that all statements respecting him are false or meaningless. We have our explanations of the mystery which do really explain a great deal, far more indeed than we could have expected to comprehend. Considering our many limitations the wonder is that we can understand so much as we do. But there is still the unsolved remainder of the problem, and it would certainly be a support to our belief in the infinite love if we could say that God so far from being cruel or indifferent, himself suffers with the suffering, is afflicted in all their affliction.

We cannot, however, accept that statement without reservation. Such an idea as we can form of the Infinite God is inconsistent with affliction and suffering as we know them. Affliction pertains to the finite not the infinite. And yet, would the infinite, if without compassion, be truly divine? And compassion is sharing in suffering by sympathy. The idea of infinitude, which after all is chiefly negative, is one that may easily confuse and mislead. Our original and fundamental idea of God is not the absolutely infinite being, the abstractly and unintelligibly divine, but the divine reality which is manifested in the world and in ourselves, and

in Christ. There is something in the intelligible order of the world to which our reason is akin: there is a purpose we can follow in part, and a progress towards good which we can recognise. In man, the crown of development, there is the dawning of holiness and love. Our fundamental conception of God is that he is wise and holy and loving.

The real God of our living faith is He who is living and working in the world, constituting the life and force of the universe. The revealed God, making himself known to us and in us as the real living, acting God of nature and of man, progressively manifesting himself in all creation, and pre-eminently in mankind and its divinest souls.

All the world's life is his. Now a part of that life is suffering. And therefore it would logically follow that the suffering must be his also. The terms of the argument are not sufficiently precise to allow of our pressing the logic: we may not be justified in saying that God suffers with the suffering; other considerations may forbid us. But it does seem clearly to follow that all suffering enters into the divine consciousness; that in some way God has part in it, besides knowing that it exists as something outside himself. What is there outside of Him in whom we live and move and have our being?

The mechanical theory of creation puts God at a distance hardly to be bridged by sympathy divine or human. The deeper thought of the world as the self-manifestation of God, not His manufacture, brings him very near to us, both in our suffering and our joy.

We perceive more easily and distinctly that God was in Christ; that Christ's holiness and love were the holiness and love of the Father appearing in him. The sufferings of Christ were a part of his love—are, at least, inseparable from it. Can we then regard them as being wholly foreign to God? And God is also in all men; all life is the outflow of his life. Christian mythology boldly makes him partake in the sufferings of earth through the Incarnation of God the son. And we can see that there was a meaning behind the myth, and though we may not be able to give it clear expression, we feel ourselves in the presence of a great truth—though veiled and dim—which brings God nearer to our love. It throws fresh light on more familiar thoughts, which from their very familiarity may become formal. God is love; and love makes the sufferings of those it loves as its own. Even with our imperfect knowledge of each other's feelings, our imperfect sympathy, our self enveloped love, that is so far as love extends, the separations of self are obliterated. That is its nature. And God has perfect knowledge and perfect love. He not only beholds affliction from the outside, but the life of the afflicted has its being in him. We do well to take home to our hearts as a living truth the thought of his compassion, his pity, his sympathy, and not to let our faith in the reality of his love be obscured by mere speculative thoughts of a vast, cold, blank Infinitude. It is a better mistake to regard God too much as in the likeness of man, than as a dead undivine fate.

And if any are inclined to an Agnostic mood of thought as to the divine beyond nature, they may remember that the more completely the divine is identified with nature, the more closely is it blended with all human life, its sufferings as well as its joys. For Christians, and for all Theists, God is above and beyond nature, as well as in nature. And there is something in the vastness and steadfastness of creation, and something also within ourselves, which points to the belief that, although the Father has a sympathy with his children inconceivably close, he yet abides in absolutely untroubled peace, and perfect eternal blessedness. We cannot quite say with the prophet that God is afflicted in all the afflictions of his children. We feel rather that his blessedness is the pledge of theirs. In all their affliction was no affliction is another reading of our text. And actually, so far as we are made one with God in faith and devotion, suffering is hushed into peace, or raised into a strange blessedness. . . . . It has been the privilege of some to feel even physical pain transfigured into the likeness of joy, for they have been driven very near to God by its keen stimulus. One who knew well "the over-mastering constancy of pain" has written:—

If God speaks to thee in the summer air
The cool, soft breath thou leanest forth to feel
Upon thy forehead; dost thou feel it God?
Nay but the wind.

And when out of the dewy garden green
Some liquid syllables of music strike
A sudden, speechless rapture through thy frame,
Is it God's voice that moves thee? Nay, the bird's
Who sings to God, and all the world and thee.
But when the sharp strokes flesh and heart run through
For thee and not another; only known
In all the universe through sense of thine,
God speaks himself to us:
Because he cannot choose a softer way
To make us feel that he himself is near,
And each apart his own beloved and known.
He gives his angels charge of those who sleep,
But He himself watches with those who wake.

God draws near to us in our sufferings, in sympathy and love; and in our love and faith he draws us near to his eternal blessedness. He has perfect knowledge of all the sorrows of the earth, and perfect knowledge is one with feeling. We wait in faith for the time when suffering and affliction will be known to us also as one of the pathways by which the Father is leading his children into full spiritual union with himself, and the perfect blessedness of his eternal peace.

"On the Quantocks."

By EDGAR A. FRIPP, B.A.

I have a vivid recollection of a walk last summer with a friend on the Quantock Hills. These hills—long held by the Britons against English invaders, the home of freedom, still preserving their British name—lie midway between the Mendips and Exmoor in Somerset, and overlook the Bristol Channel into Wales. They are wild in their beauty, solitary and wind-beaten, but with nothing savage in their aspect. We walked along their summit for miles, looking down on a peaceful landscape dotted with farms and towers of ancient churches, and northward in the Channel we saw the two islands—the Steep and the Flat Holm, which were the retreats of British hermits. Descending at last through a beech grove, we came upon Alfoxden, an old country house, the home for a short time of Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. It is a big rambling place, surrounded by grounds and stables. Brother and sister occupied perhaps three or four of the numerous rooms (they were only caretakers), and with a pupil, who helped toward the housekeeping, they were happy in their quiet work. As we sat in front of the house we thought of the poet singing to himself in that same place on a spring morning:—

"My sister ('tis a wish of mine),
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

"Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing;
From earth to man, from man to earth:
It is the hour for feeling.

"One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season."

A mile or two away, at Nether Stowey, was their new friend Coleridge and his wife, living in a labourer's cottage on the produce of an acre and a half of land and the yet scantier earnings of poetry and occasional preaching. The cottage, with an upper floor added, is still standing, and a tablet on the wall announces that it was the home of Coleridge from the year 1797 to 1800. From this small dwelling Coleridge used to walk over the Quantocks to Taunton to officiate for the Rev. D. Toulmin in the present "Unitarian" chapel, where the companion of my walk (my friend the Rev. Jeffery Worthington) now ministers to a vigorous congregation. It was Coleridge who brought the Wordsworths to this neighbourhood. He found them out in a solitary place in Dorset, introduced himself, and ere long persuaded them to move nearer to him to Alfoxden. Thus he supplied to Wordsworth what the latter needed—a congenial friend, a kindred spirit, with similar aims and convictions; and then out of the friendship, which rapidly deepened between them on the Quantock Hills, came in the year 1798 their book of poems, the *Lyrical Ballads*—a little work that marked a new era in English thought and feeling. One turns over the pages of this small volume with a reverence akin to worship. Those who have been educated under the influence which Wordsworth and others have spread perhaps at first scarcely realise what this book meant a century ago; but when we read it in the light of what our grandfathers were brought up on, the change is remarkable. Dr. Johnson was still living when Wordsworth was born. Wordsworth was a boy of fourteen when the great "lexicographer," who had dominated English letters for

a generation, was buried in Westminster Abbey. But what a gulf there is between them! One seems so near to us, so our own, so modern, so natural; and the other so old-fashioned, so far away, so artificial in spite of his sincerity. To think of Johnson is to think of society in the 18th century,—to recall ideals and opinions that have almost completely passed away. There is about him and his contemporaries an air of the City,—an atmosphere of the Fleet Street Coffee-house, of lamplight and late hours, of pompous words and big dusty folios, of wigs and sedan chairs, of Regent's Park and Vauxhall, and trim flower-beds, and grottoes, and fountains, and statues, and the promenade and gold-headed cane and snuff box. But in the *Lyrical Ballads* we feel in the open air, in the sunshine, on the hills with the sea breeze in our faces. Here there are plain clothes, and long walks, and glowing health, and good appetites. Here is simple speech, and simple love and truth. Wordsworth does not people the country with shepherds and shepherdesses who turn out to be titled folk, but with men and women and children who are real, who know the joy and sorrow of peasant life. He does not speak of sheep, and rain, and grass, and wind as "fleecy care," "vital moisture," "verdant food," and "balmy zephyr." He does not talk of the "feathered choirs" "tuning their lays." He does not turn plain words like "plant" and "sap" into "plastic tube" and "juicy tide." No; he uses the language of the people themselves. There is not a word, for instance, in *We are Seven* which a child could not understand. It is absolutely simple, like the little girl herself. As the *Lyrical Ballads* were going through the press, a friend and critic came to Wordsworth and said "Wordsworth, I have seen the volume that Coleridge and you are about to publish. There is one poem in it which I earnestly entreat you will cancel, for, if published, it will make you everlastingly ridiculous. It is called *We are Seven*. "Nay," said Wordsworth, "that shall take its chance." The critics *did* laugh at it, and crinolined ladies called it silly; but the critics and crinolines have passed away, and *We are Seven* lives.

And further, as this simple poem reminds us, with Nature a new love for gentle, homely things came into our books. What Burns' poems of the *Mouse* and *Daisy* and the *Cotter's Saturday Night* did in Scotland, the *Lyrical Ballads* accomplished in England. Coleridge's chief contribution was his *Ancient Mariner*. What a new religion—new, that is, to English society then—breathes through that quaint, weird poem. What a plea it is for simple human fellowship and for kindness to dumb creatures! Listen to these lines:—

"O, sweeter than the marriage feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends
Old men and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all."

Yes, "the dear God who loveth us, he made and loveth *all*." That is the keynote of this little book. We feel it in every page—in *We are Seven*, in the *Reverie of poor Susan*, in the poem of the old woman sitting by the thorn, in that of the *Idiot Boy*, and all the rest. Here is a new pity for the weak and helpless and tender things of the world, a new pity which has gone on growing in our midst all through the century, though often yet it is very difficult to see it. It has made us, at any rate, feel differently towards the children. It has turned our attention to the school and the nursery as the chief hope of the world. We are beginning to realise that the way to train the young is by love. We are beginning to realise that we have duties to other children besides our own. We are beginning to put out a hand to the neglected and ill-used, yes, tortured children of brutal parents. Nay, more than that, there is a faint consciousness dawning on society that our workhouse system is an abominable cruelty to the children, a shame and a disgrace to a country that calls itself Christian. There is an awakening sense among us that the children we take under our care should not be dragged up and stamped with the mark of baseness, but

should receive the best possible training to fit them for the unequal struggle of life. Still further, there is a dawning consciousness in Christian men and women that the strong and the rich and luxurious should be taxed for the uplifting of the weak and the helpless out of the mire. But I will not say more on this point. Wordsworth and Coleridge struck a note in 1798 that has sounded nearly until 1898, and will sound more clearly and strongly in the century that is coming.

Plain Talks in a Country Town about Unitarianism.

By REV. RUDOLF DAVIS, B.A.

I.—Preliminary.

Statements made to members of this congregation by "orthodox" neighbours are to be the texts of this series of addresses. There is extraordinary and ridiculous ignorance as to what Unitarianism is. The texts are evidence enough of that. And the people who know least about Unitarianism say the most violent things about it.

The text this evening is the saying, "You will go to hell if you go to the Unitarian Chapel." Now I suppose it is hardly to be expected that any of those who really believe they will go to hell if they enter a Unitarian Chapel are here to-night to hear what is to be said about such a belief. That would perhaps be a little too much to expect. But I am glad that so many members of other congregations, and perhaps of no congregation, are present; and I hope you will continue to attend these special services that you may learn that Unitarianism is not the dreadful thing some suppose it to be. For I am convinced that all that is necessary for a wider charity is to know a little more about one another. The more we understand each other the more will it be found, I believe, that we all have at bottom similar faith, hopes, and aspirations; but call the same things by different names, and dispute about these differences of name, instead of rejoicing in the common possession of the same riches of consolation, trust, and love. I do not mean to say that these differences of name, and all that they imply, are not important. They are very important. But they are not so important as Christians jealous of their particular creeds make them. For instance, there is nothing, on the positive side, that the most orthodox believe in connection with Jesus Christ as God the Son in the matter of sin, penitence, atonement, salvation, his tenderness, pity, mercy, love, that we Unitarians do not also know as attributes of God, the Father of mankind. What they in this matter call "Christ" we call "Our Father." They know they are right. We know we are right. The eternal, underlying reality is one and the same. The names are different.

I used the expression "We Unitarians" just now. It is necessary to explain. I have no right to speak for Unitarians in general. No Unitarian has authority to speak for Unitarians and say "To be a Unitarian you must believe this or that." There is no general statement of belief which must be accepted by anyone to be a Unitarian. For this reason. Unitarians stand for absolute freedom of thought in matters of religion. Unitarians say that no man may accept his religious opinions at the dictation of any man, or any body of men, or any church, or any book; we say that it is not only the privilege, not only the right, but the bounden duty of every man to think for himself on all matters of religion. To do otherwise is to waste some of the nature, to leave unused some of the talents God has given. "We may make mistakes," do you say? You may. All may. All do. The whole truth has been given and is given to no man and to no church. We are all seekers after truth. At least, if there are to be mistakes, let them be your own mistakes, and not somebody else's mistakes accepted without enquiry, on authority which is no authority. Do not bind yourself to any creed, however old and however popular, with whatever assumption of a claim on your obedience church or priest may set it forth. The older a creed is the less likely is it to be all true. We do not go to books, 1000 or 2000 years old for our chemistry or geography. Man has learnt more of God's world since then. So we have learned more of the ways of God and of our own human nature since the times of the creeds of the old councils and congresses of the churches. God reveals himself gradually to His children; not once for all at some past moment in the history of the

world; but gradually from the beginning, more and more until to-day; more and more (so far as we can know) until the end,—if any end, or whatever end may be.

We stand for free thought in matters of religion. We have no creed, catechism, sacrament, baptism, which must be accepted as a condition of membership of our congregations. The desire to join in the services; to find help in life through the services; the resolve to seek in the worship and work of the congregation help for living a life filled with love for God and fellow-man,—this constitutes membership; not belief in this or that creed or dogma, but endeavour to live a good life as children of the one God and Father of us all. Every individual Unitarian must of course have his own creed, which he strives to live out into practical life; on main points most will agree; but no Unitarian forces his personal creed upon his neighours, saying "You must believe all this, or you are not Unitarians."

And as with the pews, so with the pulpit. I have signed no Thirty-nine Articles, so I cannot perjure myself by breaking them. I have signed no confession of faith or articles of belief of any kind. I am absolutely free to preach what I believe, what I *know* to be the truth. This Chapel is dedicated to the worship of Almighty God; nothing can be simpler, nothing can be grander; beyond that, freedom for the truth.

It might be supposed that this freedom of thought led to great differences of opinion. As a matter of fact it does not lead to greater differences of opinion amongst us than exist in the most orthodox creed-bound churches. There *are* differences of opinion amongst us. Some members of this congregation, for instance, believe things I do not believe; others do not believe things I believe. Or to take orthodoxy as the standard, though not a good one,—some believe more of it and some less of it than I do. But what of that? The chief thing is not belief or disbelief in this or that detail, but the spirit,—the earnestness, humility, reverence, trust, underlying all.

Uniformity of belief is not to be desired, even if it could be attained. It is not a sign of health, but of deadness, in religious life. It means formality rather than earnest sincerity in matters of belief. Monotony is not life. Monotony is stagnation. Stagnation is death. Yet whatever our differences, I believe they are smaller—they are certainly less important to us, than the differences in other churches. The extreme low churchman and the extreme high churchman belong to two different worlds of thought. We have no such great difference. Then, in the Church of England, among the Congregationalists and Baptists, &c., there are Unitarians,—in the pulpits as well as in the pews; the differences between these and the old-fashioned orthodox in these bodies are clearly greater than any that can exist among Unitarians. The difference between the Unitarians and most of the other churches is that the other churches pretend to unanimity, and do not have it; while we do not pretend to it, and do not have it.

And, as I said, this want of unanimity, these differences of opinion, are not a sign of disease, but of health. On one condition, that articles have not been subscribed to, and neither creed, confession of faith, nor title-deed signed of such character that preaching anything else means perjury. But where a pledged word is broken, breach of faith, where that is so—and if common English words have a plain meaning, there are such cases—then difference of opinion is not a sign of health, but a sign of most deadly disease.

I have no authority—no one has any authority to speak for Unitarians: To declare with any authority that they believe this and do not believe that, because all Unitarians are free to form their own opinions, and are answerable for what they believe to God alone. Still, freedom of thought in matters of religion (it is the complaint of the orthodox in the Education question) is found to lead to the acceptance of certain foundation principles which are known as Unitarian opinions. It is with these foundation principles, upon which many are agreed, that I have to do.

These addresses have been advertised as 'plain talks.' When one man has a grievance against another, you may sometimes hear him say, "I shall just go and talk plain to him." We all know what that means. It does not heal the quarrel, but increases it. The man does not mean 'talk plain,' he means 'talk strong'; sometimes not at all plain, but unintelligible, and even inarticulate. Or at a political meeting, of either party, when a speaker gets on the subject

of some leader on the other side, we may often hear voices in the crowd shout, "Give it him hot, sir; give it him hot." And if the speaker is weak enough to follow the lead, no good is done, but rather harm. Angry passions are raised in matters where not angry passions are needed, but calm judgment. That is not the 'plain talking' I mean at all. It will be necessary to say some strong things about those who deny salvation to any who differ from them in religious belief, and about priests who claim for themselves superhuman powers. But, otherwise, I mean just simple addresses on the deepest subjects; addresses as simple and plain as I can make them, so that young and old, and those whose opportunities have given them least education, may be able to understand. I shall often take ideas and quote from books, tracts, sermons, and other pamphlets and reviews by various writers, and without naming my authority. I am not claiming to make known to you only the results of my own study and thought; I am to try to make plain the results arrived at by many scholars, to try to be their interpreter to you, to show how on first principles, possible to all, the conclusions are reasonable—even prove themselves in the stating.

[These addresses were put together without any idea of their being printed. I have made use especially of writings of Revs. W. C. Bowie, G. St. Clair, J. W. Chadwick, and M. J. Savage, without permission, but gratefully, and, I hope, permissibly.]

To be continued.

Conference Notes.

The Sheffield Conference has come and gone with results eminently satisfactory to all concerned. The local committee are to be congratulated on the smooth and successful working of all their arrangements. The task of providing for the comfort and convenience of so many visitors means a vast amount of care and thought as well as a considerable expenditure of money. The Sheffield friends out-did themeselves in generosity. Channing Hall made an admirable rendezvous, while Montgomery Hall proved itself a most convenient place for all the ordinary meetings of the Conference. The expressions of pleasure and gratitude were abundant on every hand.

There can be no doubt that the event of the Conference was Mr. Stopford Brooke's magnificent sermon. Not often in any pulpit has there been heard a sermon at once so tender and so powerful, so polished and beautiful in form, so simple and universal in substance, as that crowded congregation had the privilege of hearing. It was a sermon especially addressed to preachers, and it was fitting that it should be a splendid model of all that a sermon ought to be. It was truly a great occasion. The fine old chapel, filled to its utmost capacity (we were informed that hundreds were turned away), was in itself an inspiring sight, and the preacher did not fail to feel and use the fervour of the great gathering. For nearly an hour the audience literally hung upon the preacher's word. We have often heard Mr. Brooke, but never to such an advantage. His magnetic presence, the light of his expressive face, his earnest tones, his poetic and prophetic spirit, the intensity of his feeling and message, all combined to convey the impression of spiritual power from which none could escape. His appeal for a return to nature if the pulpit would revive its power; his vindication of the greatness of the simple, common, universal thoughts, affections and experiences of life, as the substance of preaching; his noble conception of the preacher's office, these will never be forgotten. Some who listened felt at once humbled and exalted—humbled by contrast with the great preacher, exalted by his conception of the glory of the preacher's vocation. "It was good to be there."

The papers on "The deepening of the spiritual life of our churches" were attentively heard by a large audience. No doubt many differed from the theological point of view taken by Mr. Addis, and if there had been time we might have had an exciting discussion of the subject. But those competent to deal with Mr. Addis doubtless felt that it would be a farce to attempt any counter statement in the scanty time limit of five minutes' allowed for speakers. And that prompts us to ask whether it would not be better when such subjects are dealt with that the speaking should be confined to appointed

speakers? After the papers it was refreshing to hear Dr. Drummond and Mr. V. Davies, since both had come prepared with something worth hearing. But impromptu speeches on grave matters of the Spirit's life, are not, as a rule, marked by much wisdom, and we are sorry to confess that there was no exception to the rule at Sheffield.

On the other hand, when dealing with such question as Education, Crete, Mission Work, the best part of the discussion may be, and often is, in the free spontaneous utterance of speakers moved by the occasion. Education and Crete marked some difference of opinion, but we are glad that the feeble, childish policy of tabooing all subjects upon which we are not perfectly agreed has been abandoned. It would be a sorry thing if we could not discuss grave and urgent questions of ethical and social importance without the bitterness which leads to division. If we cannot give and take in friendly talk on things where we do not think alike we only prove ourselves to be less civilised than we had supposed, and unfit, as yet, to meet one another in conference. Happily we are able to say that everything passed off, not only with good humour, but with that large toleration which comes of respect for each other's sincerity.

The public meeting in the Albert Hall was a striking success. There must have been nearly 2000 persons present. In the main the speaking was of a high order. Dr. Brooke Herford was in his happiest vein, and it would be a good thing if his speech could be read, not only by our own people, but by all the leaders of the Evangelical Free Church Council, whose treatment of Unitarians Dr. Herford handled so kindly, wisely, and brotherly.

One notable feature of the Sheffield Conference, borrowed from similar gatherings of our American brethren, was the devotion of a session to a theological paper, *without discussion*. It is to be hoped that the innovation will become an established rule. The Committee were most fortunate in securing the services of Professor Estlin Carpenter, whose paper on "Immortality" was a thoughtful, profound, and timely utterance. It made us all proud of our "Estlin;" but it did more—it deeply moved the hearts of those who were privileged to hear it, and was a fitting word to close a conference, which had begun with so noble a sermon.

The social functions were of the brightest. The luncheons, teas, suppers; the conversazione, the hospitality, the friendly greetings, helped to make the Sheffield Conference one of the pleasantest of the whole series.

We have only one word of criticism to offer. It is a mistake on such an occasion to deprive the vast congregations and audiences from audibly joining in the Lord's Prayer. However beautifully rendered by the choir, it loses the thrill and power and uniting effect that is found present when the whole body of worshippers join in. To join in at Sheffield was impossible. On such occasions the Lord's Prayer should be either said, or sung to a low monotone, which would make it possible for everybody to respond. Some of us dislike turning the prayer of prayers into a musical performance at any time, but such a performance is especially out of place when a body of ministers meet together who are not afraid to hear their own voices, and who would welcome the opportunity of uniting together, not only heart to heart, but voice to voice, in that great simple act of devotion.

Postal Mission.

The fourth annual meeting of the Birmingham Postal Mission was held on March 18th, at the Committee Room, 65 Hagley Road, Edgbaston. The President, Miss M. C. Gittins, presided. There was a fair attendance, amongst those present being Lady Martineau, Mrs. C. G. Beale, Rev. L. P. and Mrs. Jacks, Miss Martineau, Mrs. Richard Peyton, Mrs. T. W. Ryland, Mrs. Brooke Smith, Mrs. Howard Smith, and the Rev. Joseph Wood.—The Secretary, Mrs. Herbert New, read the report for the past year, which showed a satisfactory increase in the number of letters, received and written, and pamphlets distributed. The Treasurer's report shewed a small deficit.—The President, in moving the adoption of the reports, gave a short account of some of the year's work.—The resolution was seconded by Rev L. P. Jacks, who spoke in appreciation of the Mission Work, and the manner in which it was carried out.—The Rev. Joseph Wood moved the re-election of the officers, which was seconded by Mr. W. J. B. Tranter, and after a vote of thanks to Miss Gittins for presiding, proposed by Mrs. C. G. Beale, and seconded by Miss S. S. Dowson, the meeting terminated.

An Object Lesson at Stratford-on-Avon.

A Unitarian is happy in his thought of his fellow men. He has no fears for their destiny on account of their moral evil or their intellectual darkness. Somewhere the light will pierce the blackest cloud, somehow the infinite Love will redeem them to itself. And that sublime faith seems to rob him of not a little of the missionary enthusiasm which characterises other denominations. In particular he is generally anxious not to unsettle the faith of those people whose simple beauty of life speaks of a heart and mind at rest. Conduct is more than creed, he says. The question cannot fail to occur, whether we have no higher duty to Truth than this view would suggest? Is not his the fuller manhood of whom it can be said, as of Hallam—

> Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
> At last he beat his music out.
> He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
> He would not make his judgment blind,
> He faced the spectres of the mind
> And laid them: thus he came at length
> To find a stronger faith his own.

But, setting that enquiry on one side, do we, in our comparative quiescence, realise how many there are agitated in mind, beset by doubts, crying for the light? The old faith dear by sacred memories, and hallowed by unnumbered associations, personal and historic, no longer satisfies. Is there no obligation on us to take to them that higher faith which we have found based on reason, unfettered by authority of church or creed, reborn in the individual consciousness in its immediate communion with God? Is there no claim of Heaven itself upon us, not simply to open our churches and invite them in, but, as Jesus did, to go into the midst of them taking our Gospel of light and liberty and love? When at times this is done there is given an even startling insight into its moving, convincing, and helpful power. Men will hear it if we will proclaim it, and hearing will believe.

These general reflections are occasioned by what has happened in a specific instance. A course of theological lectures expository of our general attitude and trend of thought has recently been delivered, under the auspices of the Midland Christian Union, at Stratford-on-Avon. The event which led to this step was the summary rejection of a lady who applied for a vacant teachership under the Stratford School Board, and who was admittedly well qualified by character and attainments for the work, on the explicitly avowed ground that she was a Unitarian. The committee of the Union conceived it to be a bounden duty to let it be known what this Unitarianism is which constitutes a civil disability, debarring a lady, against whom no other objection was or could be urged, from rendering valuable service in the schools of the people.

It may be interesting to readers of this article to learn something of the preliminary steps which were taken. First, a room had to be secured. There are two in Stratford which are eminently suitable—the Lecture Hall of the Shakespeare Memorial, and the Town Hall. Application was made to the committee of the Memorial, and it caused them some little difficulty, for no similar request had previously come before them. They were not at all unfriendly, but ultimately, after prolonged discussion, decided that by the terms of the trust deed, which was carefully examined, they had no power to let the hall for any religious or political purpose. A letter to the Mayor asking for the use of the Town Hall brought back a prompt and decisive refusal. The emissaries of the Union, in the course of their wanderings, discovered a large room at the back of a coffee house, but so small and dingy did the house look, so devious is the way through the shop to the room, that the idea of hiring it was speedily abandoned. What was to be done? The only alternatives which remained appeared to be a Board school or the Corn Exchange. Hardy and much daring as the search party was, they quailed at the prospect of being caned in public by the Vicar, and so driven by necessity negotiated for and obtained the use of the Exchange, against which they had been warned on account of its size and its acoustic defects. A room being certain, the anxious look died out of their eyes, they held their heads higher, the fires began to glow. With a rush they dived into a narrow passage, and, bounding up precipitous stairs, burst into the offices of the *Stratford Herald*. Happily, no foe did they discover, but a friend. Not even a suggestion

of force had to be made. The editor was friendly and sympathetic. He undertook to give good advertisements, to see to all bill posting, and to report the lectures adequately. This seems the place to say that besides taking a personal interest in the lectures he never gave less than a column and a half, sometimes as much as two columns of report. In this way it is known that our message was taken to a great many who were not present to hear it, even the Vicar was among the readers, and, as the editor himself said, it served to show that in a local journal it is not always the case that fear of consequences leads to a cowardly silence. We owe a good deal to that editor.

The next question that arose was, how shall we get an audience? The means taken were simple, but they proved effective. The whole course was advertised in the paper and on posters, a handbill was sent by post to every one in Stratford whose name appears in the Directory, and these same people received by the same agency on the morning of the day on which the first lecture was delivered a copy of the Rev. R. A. Armstrong's pamphlet, "Principles and Ideals of Unitarians." Besides this, each separate lecture was conspicuously announced in the paper and by posters about the town, two every lecture day ranging the streets over the shoulders of a sandwich man, somewhat to the surprise of the inhabitants, who are as unaccustomed to the sight as they are to the vision of the Aurora Borealis.

It is amusing, now that we know the result, to recall the opinions expressed by some who have lived long in Stratford and are well acquainted with local feeling, that the lectures were almost certain to be a failure. They thought that perhaps thirty people might assemble. Those who had been organising the scheme with not a little audacity expressed a confidence of better things. To the surprise of the fearful but the delight of all when the lecturer entered the hall to open the series with an address on "Unitarianism and its Mission," there were found well over a hundred persons present. And the audiences have varied from 100 to 150 throughout, many of the same people being in regular attendance. By the kindness of the British and Foreign Association there were a large number of pamphlets for distribution each evening, which were taken with eagerness; two or three books were also sold.

It is not necessary to give even a brief *resumé* of the lectures themselves. To record that they were delivered by the Revs. J. C. Street, L. P. Jacks, M.A., B. Kirkman Gray, A. W. Timmis, E. W. Lummis, B.A., on "Unitarianism and its Mission," "A Unitarianist's Idea of God, of Man, of Jesus Christ, of the Bible," is to convey the impression that they would be of a high order, and adequately representative of our point of view. That *à priori* impression is confirmed by the calm judgment of those who, taking substantially the same positions as the lecturers, heard them. Their effect on the general audience, too, was marked. They were listened to with rapt attention, and frequently interrupted by applause. A more earnest or sympathetic attitude could not have been wished for. Of course it must not be supposed that everyone who attended has become or is in the way to becoming a Unitarian. But even the most confirmed in orthodox opinions was courteous and attentive. That there were some sincerely attached to the faith of the creeds was most plainly shown at question time. Some of the lecturers had a fine heckling. It gave them a good opportunity, and as a rule their quick-witted and keen replies called forth an instantaneous response. It was remarkable to notice how rapidly a point was seized and appreciated. On one occasion only there were no questions. That was when the Rev. E. W. Lummis delivered the last lecture on the Bible. It might have been expected that that would provoke most controversy. No one had a word to say. And the reason seemed obvious. A more lucid and unanswerable presentation of the rationalist view of the Bible it has never been the privilege of the writer to hear or read.

What, it will be asked, is the end of the whole matter? That partly lies in the inner consciousness of those present, and the wider circle touched indirectly, invisible to our eyes. The word of Truth honestly believed in and spoken with transparent sincerity and conviction wings a silent and untraced way whither God alone can follow it. And the writer felt that though the voices that spoke might never again be heard in Stratford it was more than worth while to have raised them. And so when nothing further can

be done it would be worth while in every town and village and hamlet of England. In this case, however, every sign points to the possibility of greater things. The suggestion made after the last lecture that the immediate outcome should be a regular Sunday service, met with instant and emphatic approval. Such promises of support were forthcoming that it will be little, if anything, short of a wrong if the experiment is not made.

The opportunities of missionary work that seem from this one instance to open before our Unitarian churches make the heart beat quick. It is impossible that they shall be neglected as they have in the past. "Back to Christ" is a cry of the time. We cannot get back in the sense they mean who use it. Indeed the intellectual movement of which it is the watchword stops, it seems to us, on plain historic grounds, far short of him. Back we can get, and must, if we would be found faithful in this other sense, that as he went through the towns and villages of Palestine proclaiming the God of Love, and the truths of the kingdom we shall move out of the isolation and conventionalism of our church organisations to take to our brothers and sisters of this later age the truths that are the very life and joy of our own souls.

A. A. CHARLESWORTH.

Whitherward?

V.

How are we to reconcile the idea of constant religious progress with that of some settled abiding faith in which we may quietly rest and worship and live, and which we may confidently preach to the world? I find many people rather out of heart about our first principle of free inquiry, because they think that it implies that religious belief has to be ever on the move, and may, therefore, by and by, move on altogether beyond religion. For why stop here, or there? Already, even we Unitarians, who seem to most churches to have gone to the furthest verge of Christian thought, are twitted by our theistic and ethical friends because we do not go further still. And many people hardly see what the true answer is. Can there be finality even here? they ask; and it looks to them as if possibly, little by little, everything might have to be given up—even God, and worship, and immortality itself. Hence a hesitation on the part of some to root themselves very firmly anywhere, or to teach anything very confidently, lest by and by they should have to move on and leave the whole thing behind.

But, this is an utterly needless fear! It arises from a certain confusion between quite different things which claim the name of progress. In every branch of human doing there is indeed, or should be, a certain element of progressiveness, but it is of very various kinds. In some things there may be perpetual change, going on from one idea to another. In other things, the earlier thought may be like a *foundation*, and after *that* has been really attained the subsequent progress may be simply in building upon it. The foundation is not left behind, as done with, in the after progress, but is included in it. In the intellectual basis or principle of things, there hardly can be perpetual progress away from the past, because when *any truth* is really attained, *that* stands; there may be still infinite scope for progress in its *application*, but hardly in its essence. Especially is this the case in all matters where the question is of thought and truth in things. It is not in religion only, it is the same in art, poetry, music, and still more in morals.

In all these things, as men attained to some real discernment of the beautiful and the true, that became a permanent gain, and thenceforth the progress was not away from that essential principle, but into wider applications or more varied interpretations. And so in religion. Of course there has been progress, and has to be: at first, progress in the discernment of the great verities of religious faith; but, those once clearly discerned and enunciated the *chief* "progress" thenceforward is *not* from them to something else, but *in* them, in their realization and application. We talk about "*new* religious truth." But really there can no more be any new *religious* truth, than any new *arithmetical* truth! The facts and relations of being can no more *change* than can the facts and relations of numbers. When once man has discerned the relations, $2 \times 2 = 4$, and so on up to $10 \times 10 = 100$, that is settled,—infinite progress in applying all that, *none* away from it. So

when man has once become conscious of *God*, and *Duty*, and *Immortality*—these are settled; infinite progress still in understanding them, in realizing them,—but to expect to get beyond them in any sense of having to leave them behind, is about as reasonable as to look for a new multiplication table! Take that greatest relation of man's life, suggested, not defined, in that word *God*. From the rude fetichism of the savage to the great thought of one infinite ever-present Spirit, a mighty progress indeed! But when once man had learned that thought "Infinite Spirit," and that feeling "Heavenly Father," that was a great real height attained, not just by those who felt so, for themselves only, but for the race; and that height was not some mere temporary stage, which in turn also must be left behind, but the everlasting height in which the soul may live and walk with God for evermore. Once let that height be reached, and "progress" is not *away* from it again, but in it, in its deep, rich, full experience.

So, *this* is part of our ministry of truth: to teach men more feeling of rest and settlement in the great bases of morals and religion. We want to free ourselves, and we want to help other people to get free from that vague impression (caught from the restless movement of the age), that everything is changing and passing—and has to be—Religion with the rest. It is not so. Those truths to which a reverent Freedom led our Fathers, so long before any others were discerning them, are part of the steady gain of man. The One Infinite Fatherhood, the deep inherent worth of human nature, immortality, with hope in it for all, and that great Christ who has made these things more real to man than ever before,—these abide. They have all been questioned in our time as never before, and still stand firm. Infinite scope for progress, not away from them, but in understanding them and applying them, and living in them; Christ was "the foundation," not the finished building,—but surely the true foundation.

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LESSON III.

CLEANLINESS.

"Let thy mind's sweetness have its operation
Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation."

HE THAT HATH CLEAN HANDS SHALL BE STRONGER AND STRONGER.—*Job* xvii. 9.

1. Why is it well to be clean?

2. Are all boys and girls careful about cleanliness?

3 How can you manifest this care?

By bathing my body, by having clean nails, brushed teeth, washed face and hands, and hair nicely combed.

4. Why should you give heed to these things?

Because they make me healthful and increase my self-respect.

5. Any other reason?

Yes; to be clean makes me better fitted to be among other people.

6. Can you show respect for others in these ways?

7. To whom?

My parents, teachers, and friends.

8. Can everybody do these things?

Yes; the poorest as well as the richest.

9. Have these subjects ever been regarded as religious?

Yes; the Hindoos bathe the body as a religious rite, and the Hebrews included ablutions in their ritual.

10. Other things being equal, would you think more or less of a person who was always cleanly?

11. Are filthy people generally of good character?

12. Does dirt on the body and clothes indicate anything about mental traits?

13. Are high types of life possible in filthy surroundings?

14. Look at Hall's Book on Health and see what he says about cleanliness as essential.

15. With what writers on these topics are you familiar?

16. Did you know that missionaries in our cities and to foreign lands seek to impress these matters among the first of their teaching?

17. How is health enhanced by care about these things?

18. Is carelessness concerning this ever innocent?

19. Do these things come into the realm of duty?

20. Have they anything to do with religion?

21. Can one be truly religious if he neglect the body?

22. What do you think of the old monks who had no thought about cleanliness?

23. What do you think about the need for public bath-houses in our cities?

24. How can you show more care about cleanliness?

25. Will you do it?

RECITE 2 Sam. xxii. 21; 2 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 1.

TO THE TEACHER.—Enlarge upon Sanitary matters,—bathing and the like; their influence on health, self-respect, and the increased respect of others for those who are nice in these regards. Physiology must become a part of the new religion.

LESSON IV.

HEALTH.

"Oh, know ye not that ye
The temple are of God?
Revere the earth-built shrine, where he
Should find a meet abode."—JOHNS.

THE BODY IS FOR THE LORD.—1 *Cor.* vi. 19.

1. Is health a duty?

2. If one is born with a good body, ought he ever to be sick?

3. What are the principal causes of sickness?

Poor food, wrong eating, bad air, lack of exercise, uncleanliness, use of stimulants.

4. Does study aid health?

Yes; if done reasonably and judiciously.

5. When is it an injury?

When done in hours stolen from sleep.

6. Do recreation and amusement conduce to health?

7. Are regular hours for sleep needful?

8. What habits have you detrimental to health?

9. What course do you suppose the most robust persons have adopted to secure health?

10. Ought we to consider physical exercise a duty?

11. How does it aid us in maintaining health?

12. What does the study of physiology and hygiene do for us?

13. What good books have you read on health?

14. What do you think of Plotinus, who was ashamed of his body and would not name his parents?

15. What influence does the mind exert on the body?

16. What influence does the body exert on the mind?

17. Why ought we not only to have good theories about health, but also good practice?

18. Are the parents' sins against health visited on the children?

19. What course ought one to adopt who is predisposed to disease?

20. Explain why he ought to be exceptionally careful in all that relates to health.

21. What advance has been made about sanitary matters?

22. Show how attention to drainage and securing a pure water supply affect health.

RECITE Rom. xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 19.

The Pronoun "I."

The grammarians—older and later, they are all in a tale—describe "I" as a simple pronoun, first person, singular number; and they say that a pronoun is a word that is used instead of a noun. Probably the grammarians are right—at least, it is of no use to contend with them, for they have great self-confidence in assertion, and this gives them the ear of the public. But it must be said, by way of protest, that they do much injustice to what they are pleased to call "the pronoun I." A "lingual vowel," indeed! the "first personal pronoun!" As if it were "only this, and nothing more." In reality it is, so to speak, a dux or leader amongst words; the very thinnest of capitals, but the most powerful; self-contained, able to stand alone, and to speak and act for itself; singular in having the power of a word embodied in a letter. Self-asserting, inherently sufficient, it insists upon leadership. Try to put it where you will, it comes out

plainest and foremost. Every "I" seems to have a personality in itself. It will head a sentence, whenever possible, as if by nature; and being there, it expresses, reflects, enforces the soul and habit of the person who uses it.

We English ought to pay special respect to the "I," and to give it peculiar consideration and honour; for our "I" is the simplest, the strongest, the most direct, the fullest in expressiveness of all the "I's" in the languages of the world, living or dead. An ingenious critic might base the Shandean theory upon it alone; for the English "I" stands plainly for the English character: positive, direct, vigorous, self-reliant, a little contemptuous, or, at least disregardful, of others. Compare the rest with it. See how it broadens into a whole system of philosophic reflection in the Greek Εγω; and thins down into weakness in the same form repeated in the Latin *Ego*. How poor, again, it looks in the *Je* of the French; how lazy and ineffective in the Spanish *Yo;* how softly indecisive in the Italian *Io;* how comical in the Swedish *Jag;* how rough and hard in the German *Ich*. The Anglo-Saxon comes nearest; but, after all, the *Ic* isn't half so vigorous as the plain, strong, simple, self-asserting modern English "I." How clear it is; how shapely, with its prim, straight stem, not unlike the shaft of a column, broadening out into a delicate capital at the top, and resting upon a steady base. Nothing could be simpler: a child may trace its form, and so may the trembling hand of an old man. As for us, in middle life, we have no difficulty, save to prevent the necessary "I" running to seed in the superfluous "Ego."

People who suppose that but little can be said about the pronoun "I" are very much in the dark. The real trouble is to compress into reasonable compass that which should be said when one begins to talk or to write upon it. Note, for instance, the vast range opened by considerations of how the letter adapts itself to the expression of different emotions, desires, phases of mind, shades of character; how, whenever called upon, it lends itself to each and all, takes their colour, falls in with their passing humour, sustains at every turn a new part. There is no mood in which the "I" fails to find scope for its peculiar power, no passion too intense for it, no delicate *nuance* of meaning that it is unable to convey. In use by those in authority, it is by turns grave, emphatic, commanding, compulsive; in persuasion it is convincing, entreating, seductive, irresistible; in assertion it may be arrogant, harsh, intrusive, or firm, modest, self-respecting. By the slightest shade of difference, the faintest change of inflection, it expresses contrasts and opposites—just confidence or ignorant presumption, decision or hesitation, strength or feebleness, anger or reproof. It suits equally pride or humility, affection or aversion, condescension or disdain, friendship or enmity. It may be threatening or persuasive, resolute or temporising; boisterous as the rough north wind, sweet as the summer south.

It is not proud, this letter "I," but comes and goes at anybody's command, and suits itself to all sorts and conditions of life. The king can use nothing stronger than his "I will;" the beggar nothing more melting than his "I want." In the language of ceremony the "I" fits just as well as in the familiar talk of domestic life. In the senate, the camp, the pulpit, at the bar, or upon the stage; in the tumult of popular assemblies, storm-tossed, passion-swayed; in the calm quietude of the study, in the familiar chat by the road-side, in the pleasant, easy, half-spoken talk before the winter fire, when work is over, and mind and body sink into sweet repose—in one and all—in the converse of pastor and people, parents and children, lover and mistress, husband and wife; in every habit, relation, phase, change, or incident of life, the "I" has its appropriate and perfect place, suited to all persons, all topics, all circumstances, and all times.

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THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Dead Doll.

You need not be trying to comfort me, I tell you my dolly is dead;
There's no use saying she isn't, with a crack like that in her head.
It's just like you said it wouldn't hurt much to have my tooth out that day,
And then when the man 'most pulled my head off, you hadn't a word to say.

When my mamma gave me that ribbon—I was playing out in the yard—
She said to me most expressly, "Here's a ribbon for Hildegarde,"
And I went and put it on Tabby, and Hildergarde saw me do it,
And I said to myself, "Oh, never mind, I don't believe she knew it."

But I know that she knew it, now; and I just believe, I do,
That her poor little heart was broken, and so her head broke, too.
Oh, my dolly, my little baby! I wish my head had been hit;
For I've hit it over and over, and it hasn't cracked a bit.

But since the darling is dead, she'll want to be buried, of course;
We will take my little wagon, nurse, and you shall be the horse,
And I'll walk behind and cry; and we'll put her in this, you see,—
This dear little box,—and we'll bury her, then, under the maple tree.

And papa will make her a tombstone, like the one he made for my bird;
And he'll put what I tell him on it,—yes, every single word.
I shall say, "Here lies Hildergarde, a beautiful doll who is dead:
She died of a broken heart, and a dreadful crack in her head."

—*Home Queen.*

The Doll up a Tree.

"I saw a little girl weeping," said the Moon; "she was weeping over the wickedness of the world. She had got as a present the most beautiful of dolls. Oh! wasn't it a doll—so nice aud delicate, and not at all made for rough handling. But the little girl's brothers, those big fellows, had taken the doll and set it up in a high tree in the garden, and then run away. The little girl could not reach the doll, could do nothing to help it down; and that is why she was weeping. The doll wept when she wept; it stretched out its arms among the green branches, and looked quite miserable. Yes, here were some of the hard things of life, which mamma spoke about so frequently. Poor doll! The evening was already beginning to grow dark, and night would come on while it was still up in the tree. Was it to be left sitting there alone the whole night through? No! the little girl's heart could not bear this. 'I will stay with you' said she, though she was not so very stout-hearted. She fancied she already quite plainly saw those little ugly fairy men, with their tall sugar-loaf hats, peeping from amongst the bushes, and that down in the dark walk long goblin-shapes were dancing. These, she imagined, came nearer and nearer, stretched out their hands towards the tree where the doll was sitting, and laughed and pointed their fingers at her. Ah! how frightened the little lass was! But if one has not done anything wrong, thought she, nobody can do one any harm. I wonder whether I have done anything wrong? And she remembered, 'Ah! yes,' said she, 'I laughed at the poor duck with the red rag about its leg, which hobbled along in such a funny way—that is why I laughed at it—but it is wrong to laugh at the animals.' Then she looked up at the doll: 'Did you laugh at the animals?' she asked, and it seemed as if the doll shook its head.

A Puzzling Question.

Grandma says (though I don't see why)
That I am the apple of her eye;
Brother calls me a dunce; Aunt Fan
Says she thinks I'm a little man;
Father says I'm a reg'lar boy,
And mother calls me her pride 'n' joy.

Now this is what I would like to know:
How in the world can a fellow grow
Who's a pride 'n' joy, an apple, a dunce,
A reg'lar boy, and a man, at once?

The Fields in May.

What can better please,
When your mind is well at ease,
Than a walk among the green fields in May?
To see the verdure new,
And to hear the loud cuckoo,
While sunshine makes the whole world gay.

When the butterfly so brightly
On his journey dances lightly,
And the bee goes by, with business-like hum,
When the fragrant breezes and soft
Stirs the shining cloud aloft,
And the children's hair, as laughingly they come.

When the grass is full of flowers,
And the hedge is full of bowers,
And the finch and the linnet piping clear,
Where the branches throw their shadows
On a footway through the meadows,
With a brook among the cresses, winding clear.

—W. ALLINGHAM.